2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Virtuous People, the village of Eḍapalli became strongly Gandhian in the 1930s and today retains this idealism, has a well-balanced mixed farming economy and an optimistic outlook on the future—a combination of factors that is quite rare in Badaga villages. It was also the first village to send a Badaga to the United States for post-graduate training. Eḍapalli seems to have been a progressive community for some generations.

The Destruction of the Temples

Building and destroying temples were equated in Badaga thinking with establishing or destroying a religion. In one village, as we have seen, Badagas sympathetic to some aspects of Christianity built a temple to Jesus in which they placed the New Testament they had been given. In another village Metz knew some Badagas who were willing to pray with him but not openly to call themselves Christians. They even asked him to pull down their Hindu temple. Metz suggested it would be better if they showed their faith by doing this themselves. They refused but did remove the *puːja* offerings at the temple and kneel in front of it while the missionary prayed with them (Metz, 1864, 135–136).

In 1864 a Protestant chapel was consecrated in the Badaga village of Neːrikambe, and in 1865 famine hit the Nilgiris. Some of the Badaga leaders felt this happened because their gods were not properly honoured, and during the next few months many villages went through the unprecedented steps of tearing down their temples and building new, bigger ones in their place. By this means the people hoped to regain the favour of the gods and counter the influence of the mission. It is noteworthy that brick, a European novelty which up until this time had rarely been used in Badaga building, was the material of these new temples; stone is the usual material even today. In one large village several temples were destroyed by the headman and four new ones built, two of them for gods not previously worshipped there.[12] The process of rebuilding temples continued for several decades and affected 'almost all the villages' (B.E.M.S., 1870, no. 31, 22–23; 1905, no. 66, 66).

Sanctions against Conversion

Social pressures were constantly being exerted on converts, their

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Todas or Kotas: the old fear of witchcraft lingers on. In the middle age-group of the sample (35 to 54 years) there was a significant correlation[15] between dislike of Kurumbas and a feeling that the world in general is a dangerous and evil place—an interesting confirmation of our earlier assertion that witchcraft accusations against Kurumbas have in the past been associated with general feelings of insecurity and stress (see above, pp. 200–201).

In general Badagas feel little compunction to maintain an association that is clearly not economically feasible. Among the indigenous peoples they are taking the lead in finding and internalizing new orientations, which help them secure a place in the national economy and society at the expense of their traditional position in Nilgiri society. While Kotas, Kurumbas and even some Todas are adopting the Badagas as a model, Badagas are following urban Tamilians and Christians in valuing the products of modern technology, seeking monetary profit, good education and a westernizing life-style they think acceptable in a modern urban context.

CHANGING SOCIAL STRUCTURE

We have already commented on changing patterns of marriage and residence and will now examine how the position of the gentry and the roles of the individual have altered with recent changes in the social structure. The central idea in this discussion is that social structure can usefully be defined as a system of linked network-clusters and that the status of a villager is determined by his position in these clusters.

The distinction between gentry[16] and non-gentry is sufficiently precise that all families can be assigned to one category or the other by those who know them. Perhaps five per cent of the community is now considered as gentry. Until the mid-nineteenth century the most prestigious family of gentry was the largest family possible. This was often achieved through polygynous marriages; in one case in the 1950s, probably a record for Badagas, a wealthy but infertile man had five wives simultaneously. In these families men were often several decades older than their wives; I know of a case where the husband was over 90 when the youngest of his three wives was 26. Polygyny, however, is no longer common.

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

trips to various South Indian cities, see numerous films and delight in mechanical devices. The minority who now live in the Nilgiri towns, among them numerous Christians, have taken on a variety of new urban jobs and are found in most of the professions. Few were involved in the Independence movement, fewer are under the influence of Gandhi's philosophy and fewer still understand or care for Marxism. The Communist vote is negligible, and the idea of revolutionary communism unappealing. For Badagas change means securing profit in a capitalist economy, adopting a westernized style of individualism and thus shifting away from ascribed status towards that which is achieved.

This transformation has come about while physical communications have been improving steadily. All the more populous villages are linked with the towns by regular bus services. Since the beginning of the century there has been a railway to the plains. Many of the middlemen who sell fertilizer or buy potatoes have their own trucks; some large-scale tea planters have cars or jeeps. Radios are widely accessible now that the villages are electrified; yet radio is mainly a channel for light music and is not as important as the 'social' films in introducing new, primarily urban, values and wants to the Badagas. Newspapers have a broad circulation in the villages and are much more effective than radios in transmitting news. Today, therefore, every Badaga village has easy access to information about the world beyond the Nilgiris, through seeing films, reading the papers or talking with friends and relatives who work in the towns.

SOME CONCLUSIONS ON MODERNIZATION

There is a multi-causal type of linkage in socio-cultural changes like those documented in this study: one single factor does not by itself cause a new situation, but several discernible factors combine to cause variant patterns of a new situation. We may state this process in another way. When a community moves from subsistence cultivation to rational participation (i.e., maximization of gains) in a cash economy, certain changes come about in the culture and the social organization. These are conditioned by a combination of local ecological factors, outside governmental activity, the availability of certain goods, services and entrepreneurial personnel, adequate flow of information, and the play of

3: Hockings, E-5 (1962-1963) 1968
AWSO Badaga AWSO

121 A ritual is not a network, but it is a medium of communication and provides an occasion for the personnel of all the networks of the village to converge in one place and act out their public roles. Ceremonial events are thus events of communication in two distinct senses. First, the confluence of people allows many local information networks to be reactivated; someone asks about getting a loan, another seeks opinions on a land dispute, a third takes a look at some potential brides. Second, the ritual itself conveys information to the participants. As we shall demonstrate, this message is a dramatization of the idea that the community is stable and its future assured.

231 (101) The Todas, Kotas, and Badagas, three communities on the Nilgiri Plateau[1] in Southern India, are all cattle-keepers. For the Todas buffalo herding is the major occupation; for the Badagas it is subsidiary to agriculture; and for the Kotas it is subsidiary to both agriculture and a variety of traditional handicrafts. Each of these groups now keeps cattle only for their milk products, though until several decades ago the Badagas and Kotas also used oxen for drawing their ploughs.[2] Each group gives salt to its herds once or more a year and each culture has a complex ceremonial for feeding the salt to the cattle.

121 (829) (232) (824) Confining ourselves to the Badagas,[3] we now ask a question that would in fact be equally pertinent to the case of the Todas or the Kotas: why is the giving of salt a day-long ceremony instead of merely a routine act of animal husbandry? Why are so many people and so much time involved in what a single boy could do in half an hour? The Badagas themselves would answer this question by invoking the "force of tradition"; but surely tradition is not *per se* an adequate explanation for the persistence of such a ceremony. The Badagas also maintain what is to them a perfectly rational explanation for the act of giving salt to their cattle. After heavy rains the young grass "tastes saltless," and the herds graze unenthusiastically; their owners make up this dietary deficiency by giving salt to the animals. The explanation suggests that these people understand something of the leaching process, but it certainly does not answer our original question: why has the act of salt-giving become a major annual ceremony?

231 796 Salt is regularly given to the cattle in March and at the end of December; in years when the grass is "saltless" a third dosage is given, generally in the month of June. On all three occasions the salt is given to the animals on a Monday, the weekly holiday of the Badagas, but it is only in March that the event is treated ceremonially.[4]

174 178 In the various writings abut the Badagas during the past 150 years there are only two brief references (Benbow 1928: 32-33; Karl 1945: 17), both fairly recent, to this salt-giving ceremony. Nevertheless it seems certain that the ceremony has a considerable antiquity; the comparable Toda ceremony was mentioned by Father Finicio in 1603 (Rivers 1906: 726). The Badagas did not become literate until the present century, yet they have an extensive and generally credible body of orally transmitted history relating to their way of life in the days shortly before the British settled in the Nilgiri Hills (i.e., prior to 1820). These Badaga accounts are explicit about

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

about to receive food, she brought a pot outside, left it on the ground, and stepped back about five meters while the visitor poured her foodstuffs into the pot. This was in fact the usual way of giving food to untouchables in South India. As women did not expect very good food in the menstrual hut they tended to fill themselves up before leaving home: "The eye of the ox which has been ploughing is on the village; the eye of a woman just before menses is on the hearth." A more rambunctious proverb states: "The woman who has not eaten is like the one in the menstrual hut; the woman who does not fart is like summer"—summer being a rather uncomfortable period.

Adult Sexual Activity

3.15. Badaga society seems to be more tolerant of sexual escapades, whether within or beyond the bonds of marriage, than is usually recorded as the case in other Hindu communities. Thus a frustrated missionary reported: "Badaga women, who have not come much into contact with Christianity, freely express their disgust at the miserable condition of Christian women, who are bound to one husband only!" (Anonymous 1894: 547). A proverb still heard on the lips of Badaga men expresses their exasperation with womenfolk: "A passionate wife is as bad as a house that leaks" (Metz 1864: 94). Yet there is little of the double standard of morality that separates the sexes in orthodox Hindu and Muslim India. Badagas of both sexes enjoy coitus, a factor that is essential to procreation, for they believe that unless a couple are properly satisfied by the act the woman will not conceive. Ignorance of the physiological facts of paternity is evidenced from the belief expressed by older informants that, if either husband or wife is contemplating divorce and remarriage, then pregnancy cannot occur even though they still have intercourse. Nevertheless they do believe that a foetus grows out of the semen in the womb, and it is fed by blood coming from the mother's belly (10.13). In those situations where a couple are satisfied but no pregnancy ensues, it is assumed that some sin has been committed by either the couple or their ancestors.

Despite this emphasis on the pleasurable aspect of sex, much coitus is reported to occur for other reasons. When a couple have been working hard all day in the woods or fields they really feel the need for total rest throughout the night. Yet they may still have inter-

178 regarded as a fairly orthodox Saivite would not want to be seen at a funeral where
648 Kotas play dance-music beside the corpse: not only have the Kotas become "un-
touchable" musicians, but Hindu orthodoxy frowns upon the idea of dancing at a
(829) funeral. The attitudes of many Badagas toward Kotas -- as well as toward Todas
and Kurumbas -- have changed in recent years: our "modern" Badaga is now
thinking of himself, in the economic and religious spheres of his life, as more of
a Hindu citizen and less of a Nilgiri tribesman; and his social distance from Kotas
and Kurumbas has now been increased, since they fall into the status of Untouch-
ables, from his view-point. The new orientation seems appropriate to a Badaga
who finds himself competing for jobs or for official favors with people from all
184 over southern India. It is noteworthy that the "conservative" Badagas of the Kunda
area (cf. p. 111) are by far the wealthiest villagers in the District, for nearly all
of their land is given over to flourishing tea and coffee plantations. This conti-
nuing source of wealth and employment is so certain that the people there do not
feel themselves in serious competition for work or for official favors with men
(648) from other parts of India. Their confidence in their future well-being allows
them to continue at least their ceremonial links with the Kotas. Few tools are
178 now made by the local Kotas, on the other hand, because these particular Kotas
648 are preoccupied with their own tea plantations, and the great quantity of specia-
lized metal items needed on a plantation has necessarily to be sought in the town
markets. In summary, both the Kotas and the Badagas in this part of the Nilgiris
activate their traditional relationship only so far as economic expediency permits:
where the market offers the same article at a lower price, or where one's labor
can be spent more profitably on plantation work than on some traditional obliga-
tion, the traditional link falls into abeyance.

5: Hockings E-5 (1962-1963) 1989
AW50 Badaga AW50

The Present "Ambi-legal" System in Badaga Villages

692 It will be recalled that in an earlier chapter which described the traditional social organization of the Badagas we spoke of a politico-juridical system which linked the Badagas closely to the Kotas, and provided for the settlement of disputes by a hierarchy of local councils (pp. 29-43). Today, while this system still remains in operation for "civil" cases, it is very common for Badagas also to make use of the official legal system of India in the settlement of disputes and [829] the punishment of crimes. Since the use of both systems is not seen by the villager as a clear matter of choice, but rather of trying to play one system off against the other so as to maximize his own advantages, we might characterize the present Badaga situation as being an "ambi-legal" one. Let us take as our point of departure for an analysis of this phenomenon the changing role of the Badaga headmen.

175 692 (648) To understand the role of the village headman in local government one needs to know that after the British arrived in the Nilgiris (in 1820) they perpetuated village government through the previously existing hereditary headmen, and bestowed upon these men the title of manegar. The hierarchy of these headmen did not come into the British plan for local government, however: manegars were 632 typically "village", and not hamlet or divisional headmen. From the end of the [622] last century the headman role has been divided up: a manegar was appointed in major villages -- generally the chief hamlet of an indigenous "village" grouping -- by the British District Collector (Grigg 1880: 366); but the Badagas still selected their own hamlet headman (who then received the title of sub-manegar and continued to receive a small salary from the British administration). The manegar appointed was preferably a literate man rather than simply a prestigeful one; though

692 nuisances under the Indian Penal Code (sections 277, 283, 290 and 510) and
671 the Madras Towns Nuisances Act, and generally any other offence under the Indian Penal Code or any special or local law which is punishable with fine only or with imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or with both.

(681) (685) The sentence which a panchayat court may pass is [a] fine not exceeding Rs. 15, except in cases of theft or mischief where the fine may extend to twice the value of the property stolen or the amount of damage caused. (Madras 1958: 50)

121 Since such a multiplicity of courts, officials, regulations and legal systems now faces a Badaga, how does he select where to go with a legal complaint? There are a number of factors that guide his handling of the problem.

692 The prime consideration is apparently not the seriousness of the complaint but the good repute of a man's own village. I know of several cases of murder and suicide which were handled entirely by the traditional Badaga council in the village where the acts were committed. This procedure contravenes Indian law, since any such criminal offences should automatically be reported to the police and if necessary be examined in a magistrate's court. (It is supposedly the (632) headman's duty to decide whether a case should be placed before a magistrate.)

692 Badagas, on the other hand, whether siding with the victim, the malefactor, or
• 829 neither, prefer that all such matters be cleared up by the headman and his council without the village name being marred through a police investigation and loose gossip. For the same reason they also try to stop the case going on to the next higher level of council in their own traditional system.

691 Despite this state of affairs, it is very common for a case which has al-
692 ready been judged by the village council to be taken to a court of law by whichever side has lost; hence we characterize the present procedure as "ambi-legal". The practice has arisen because it is widely known that the decisions of a traditional village council are not legally binding and are often not very impartial either. On

159 is now up to Ranga to solve the problem."

695 The solution which Ranga chooses must be couched in the current ambi-

159 legal idiom. If he attempts a solution purely in the traditional idiom or purely in

692 the lawcourt idiom, without taking the alternate system and Jogi's possible manipulation of it into account, then Ranga's chances of ultimate success are slim.

177 The point which the case of Jogi and Ranga underlines is that the intro-

671 duction of British procedural law in the 19th Century did not simply offer the Bada-

692 gas an alternative approach for solving conflicts in their community. To any

829 Badaga the procedure in the lawcourt must have seemed capricious: it operated on the assumption that all individuals were equal before the law, and that the proceedings must work directly towards a just decision; whether a man was a Toreya or a member of the gentry was irrelevant to how he would be treated; his past history and his family's reputation were similarly not taken into consideration when

578 the specific case came before the court. To Jogi and Ranga, therefore, as to many

691 of their Badaga contemporaries, the lawcourt is less of a mechanism for dispen-

692 sing justice than a possible means of revenge and a process for overcoming one's opponent (regardless of who is actually in the right). The use of a lawcourt can involve an opponent in crippling legal costs, or the threat of these costs may frighten him into compliance with what is required of him. The threat of going to a lawcourt after one's case has received unfavorable treatment at the hands of the village council can also be used to undermine the authority of the elders on

578 that council and cast aspersions upon the honor of the village. For over a cen-

691 tury the Badagas have had a saying that runs: "If you take a complaint to a Magistrate, it is as if you had put poison into your adversary's food" (Grigg 1880: 224). The belief is still voiced today; but in the interim Badagas have learned how to

As the wealth of such families increases, and as the possibility of their upward mobility, as modern Indian families rather than as Badaga villagers, becomes a reality, their attitudes toward Nilgiri society and its marriage regulations change. No longer are the requirements of the traditional culture so demanding or so relevant; for these people are now oriented towards a larger South Indian society, a society whose aims and ideals are stated -- albeit in exaggerated form -- in the morality and cultural equipment of modern romantic Indian films.

Religious Change since 1913

Four kinds of religious change have affected various sections of the Badaga community during the present century. These changes are not directly related to each other, and need to be considered separately:

1) Bhajan and Kriśna worship have become popular;

2) The Lingayats have developed their previously tenuous ties with Lingayats in Mysore State;

3) A few distinctively Tamilian and Kanarese festivals and rituals have been adopted;

4) A Roman Catholic community has appeared among the Badaga Christians.

These developments will each be discussed in turn.

1) Bhajan and Kriśna worship are new to the Badagas: Kriśna is a Vaiśnavite deity, the Badagas are Śaivites. The performance of bhajan (group hymns) began among Badagas some 20 or 25 years ago; so popular has it now become, nevertheless, that nearly every hamlet has one or more sets of bhajan instruments, and there is a regular -- often a weekly -- performance of the sacred songs. Bhajan songs are devotional hymns, generally in praise of the lord Kriśna; they are played on the instruments of Tamilnād, not of the Nilgiris, and the words

5: Hockings E-5 (1962-1963) 1989
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Christian group but also toward the Hindus (Périe 1932: 1-8).

This situation continued with little change until after 1947, by which time the Catholics were almost as numerous as the Protestants. Independence brought new factors into play, however. Conversion of Hindus to either Christian sect virtually ceased with national independence, as did most conversion of Protestants to Catholicism. While there are still some points of disagreement between members of the two churches (preëminently in ecclesiastical matters), as there are between Christians and Hindus, these are being obfuscated as other cultural orientations become more relevant to the changing conditions of life in the Nilgiris. There are now some indications in casual conversation that the cultural orientations of the Badagas are being adapted to a newly emerging pattern of social solidarity; one which links all Badagas, whether Christian or Hindu, in the face of competition with all other Indians. Some Hindu Badagas, for example, were willing to tell me that "The Christians set us a good example"; by these words they were alluding to the standards of honesty, hard work, education, and "progressive" treatment of their women for which the Christians are noted (cf. Ranga 1934: 5-6). The Badaga community is now always called a "caste", and its members are more strongly aware of their identity as "Badagas", a community which the Government shows particular concern and beneficence for by treating as a "Backward Class". The chances of material benefit through better employment opportunities which, a century ago, prompted a few Badagas to change their attitudes sufficiently to become Christians, now prompt their descendants to alter other orientations not closely related to religious values but rather to a government and its new classification of employment priorities. Such a change in orientation holds out the chance of upward mobility; but in that process conversion to Christianity is now an anachronistic mechanism.

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121 matter by Lambert (1962).

[177] In another study by Lambert, this one of factory-workers in Poona (1963), he discusses the types of social change that accompany the "modernization" process.

554 A comparable situation to that of these urban workers can already be seen in the
[121] "modernization" of the Badagas: Badagas are finding social mobility much easier and much more rapid than it was half a century ago; more complex divisions of labor are emerging with the appearance of labor contractors and college graduates among the ranks of the Badagas; people are becoming cognizant that their lot can be changed

554 with effort as well as good luck. This last point can even be supported with some
•829 statistical evidence: in a sample of 420 Badagas (including 119 females), the follow-
[125] ing responses were given to the question, "Does success in life depend mainly on luck?" --.

Yes, mainly on luck	47.4%
Both on luck and hard work	4.3
No, only on hard work	46.4
No, only on God's will	0.2
(Not ascertained)	1.7

("Luck", or "good fortune", was thought to be the factor which caused uncontrollable circumstances to act in favor of the individual. The English word luck or lakku is sometimes used in Badagu speech.)

Females stressed luck much more than hard work (61.3% favored luck, 31.9% hard work), whereas males showed an opposite bias (41.9% favored luck,

(446) while 52.2% stressed hard work). It is thus true of the Badagas that about half of them recognize the value of hard work (perhaps helped along by luck) in making a

478) success out of their lives. The concept of success is not a new preoccupation in their economic activities; the concept of depending primarily upon one's own effort for it probably is new, however.

121 In summary, the towns of the Nilgiris have been instrumental in inducing recent social and economic changes. Towns do act as focal points for the dissemination of "modern" ideas and values, which reach the villagers either through intermediary people or through the mass communication media. Such ideas and values are not always fully accepted by the community, but they are undoubtedly of great influence, especially upon the younger, more educated men.

(2) The second regularity to be discussed in this conclusion is that major shifts in the economic activity are generally followed by changes in the family organization. It is paradoxical that Lambert's study (1963) stresses how little change there has been in the family organization; because in the case of the Badagas the changes in family structure have already gone far. Lambert's data do not distinguish between nuclear and joint families, as ours do; but he does state that factory workers support households with a higher number of dependents (the mean was 5.2 members per worker's family) than was to be found in the general population of Poona (with a mean of 4.5 members) (Lambert 1963: 39). He postulates that the relatively high earning power of factory workers attracts related dependents to their homes, people who are not members of the nuclear family. This situation is probably confined to a factory-worker class in the context of a city; it is not reflected at all in the material available for the Badagas. These people illustrate a trend, 178 seemingly widespread in developing countries, in which the younger, more educated 592 and urbanized men often prefer to set up their own homes and live as a nuclear family, [829] rather than stay with the traditional joint family. The Badagas themselves recognize this trend, and explain it in terms of the changed values that have come with educational and economic betterment. In a survey of 420 Badagas, I found that 50.2% were living in nuclear families (some lacking either a spouse or children); whereas